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The Blind Relief Act in Illinois
and its Administration in Cook County.



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THE BLIND RELIEF ACT IN ILLINOIS AND ITS
ADMINISTRATION IN COOK COUNTY

THE state of Illinois has created a number of institutions and agencies for the education and care of the blind and for the curative treatment of those threatened with loss of sight. For the State School for the Blind, established in 1847, \$415,504 was appropriated for the biennium 1929-31; for the Industrial Home for the Blind, \$119,581; for the Eye and Ear Infirmary, \$523,435; for the Division of Visitation of Adult Blind in their homes, \$76,742; for excess cost of educating blind children in Chicago, \$26,240, making a total of well over a million dollars without counting scholarships of from \$300 to \$500 that may be granted to blind students in colleges and universities or payments to beneficiaries under the Blind Pension or Relief of the Blind Act, to which attention is called in the following pages.

The School for the Blind, the Eye and Ear Infirmary, the Industrial Home, and the Division of Visitation are all under the administration of the Department of Public Welfare, but there is no administrative relationship between that Department and the relief benefits paid the blind. The Blind Pension Act is, so far as the statute prescribes, administered by the county clerks and the state auditor except that in Cook County under the statute enacted in 1925 setting up the County Bureau of Public Welfare¹ the Blind Relief Act was listed with the public "social services" that were to pass to the jurisdiction of the new Bureau. In the following pages an attempt is made to set out the special features of the law and to suggest some of the problems arising in the course of its administration.

The summaries of a few case records will suggest the nature of the problem and clarify the discussion which follows.

Mr. Schmidt is a widower of sixty-seven years of age who had been blind as a result of glaucoma for about fifteen years when he applied for the pension in

¹ *Laws of Illinois* (1925), p. 264. Smith-Hurd, *Revised Statutes*, chap. 34, secs. 67a f. It was at the request of the Director of the Bureau that the following material was assembled. The study was made possible by the co-operation of the Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago, to whom acknowledgment is made.

should be prepared and issued by the State Department; that their interpretation of requirements must necessarily be liberal toward the counties, and that educational supervision by the State Department is essential.

This plan commends itself as it seeks to give relief where there is the greatest need, and much credit is due the representative of the United States Children's Bureau. Slight revision will probably be necessary, however, as under this plan, unless the phrase "amount expended" is finally interpreted as understood here, the pro rata in some instances would exceed 50 per cent of the amount expended by the county.

A careful study of the whole subject of mothers' aid, including the distribution of the state appropriation, is being made this year by the Subcommittee on Dependency of the Illinois Child Welfare Commission, and definite recommendations will soon be formulated.

The situation at the present time is, then, that the Department is distributing the fund for 1929-30 on the basis proposed by the Committee of Judges; that at the meeting of the Association of Judges to be held in June, to which social workers, probation officers, the Children's Committee, and others are invited, plans representing the different policies will be the subject of discussion, and it is hoped to agree upon a more thoroughly considered program.

EDNA ZIMMERMAN

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

1927. He was born in Illinois and has lived in Chicago for over thirty years. He has no income aside from the pension, as the savings from his earnings as a barber were spent on treatment and living expenses after he became disabled.

At present the patient lives with his unmarried daughter in a well-furnished, two-room, modern kitchenette apartment, renting for \$55 a month, in a store-and-apartment building on the business street of a South Side neighborhood. His daughter earns \$25 a week working for the Telephone Company and provides a home for him, in return for which he contributes his pension to the common fund and has definite responsibilities and tasks in keeping up the home. He has no income aside from the pension except an annual gift of a \$25 Christmas savings account from another daughter, who, he says, is unable to do more for him.

Mr. and Mrs. Peters are a young couple, both graduates of the high school in the Jacksonville State School for the Blind. Both receive the pension. Mr. Peters graduated in 1916, when he was twenty-one years old, and immediately applied for the pension and has received it regularly since that time. At that time he lived with his father and a brother, who gave him a home. In 1925 he married Margaret Coleman, who had been supported by her parents since her graduation from Jacksonville. The young couple took an apartment and managed very nicely with the pension and Mr. Peters' income as a house-to-house silk-hosiery salesman. At this time an investigation was made, and it was reported to a member of the Board of County Commissioners that Mr. and Mrs. Peters were in good circumstances as Mr. Peters was said to be earning from \$25 to \$30 weekly, but no action was taken with regard to the pension. Two years after their marriage at the time of the birth of the baby Mrs. Peters was very ill, and they had a difficult time and moved to live with her parents.

At present Mr. and Mrs. Peters are living in a six-room, well-furnished, modern apartment in a good neighborhood with Mrs. Peters' mother and two unmarried brothers, who work irregularly. They pay from \$12 to \$14 a week for room and board for themselves and the two-year-old son. In addition, Mrs. Peters assists with the work. Their income consists of about \$600 a year earned by Mr. Peters as a house-to-house hosiery salesman and from the two pensions, as a grant has been made to Mrs. Peters within the last three months. Mr. Peters carries insurance, for which he pays 25 cents a week. They have no debts but have just completed paying the hospital bills incurred during Mrs. Peters' illness. They now hope to be able to save toward the education of their son.

This young couple in spite of their handicap lead a normal, independent life in so far as is possible, interested in their friends, radio, current events, etc. Mr. Peters thinks that he can always earn a part of his income but that the pension is necessary to supplement this. In accord with the organization of the Society for the Mutual Advancement of Blind People, in which they are active members, they strongly oppose begging. Their contacts with the Blind Pension

Department have been very few, and they do not feel any need of such assistance in adjusting their affairs as the institution of social service would give them. An investigation of case-work service might show the couple able to get along with the assistance of relatives and possibly one pension.

Mr. McKenney, aged fifty-three, is an Irishman, a citizen of the United States since 1902 and a resident of Chicago since 1896. About 1917 he was badly hurt in an accident in which his head was crushed when he was struck by an automobile. He settled for \$300, but afterward gradually lost his sight and became unable to work. His brother knew of the pension, an application was filed, and a grant was made in 1921. The pension has been received continuously since then. The pensioner lived with his brother, but he says that his sister-in-law resented his presence in the house and was unkind to him in many ways. After the increase of the pension to \$365 a year he was able to move from his brother's home and to live practically independently.

At present he pays \$28 a month for his single room and board in a boarding-house for laboring men in South Chicago. His brother gives him \$5.00 occasionally, and friends give him small amounts toward replacing clothing and for other personal expenses. His brother apparently has a kindly, interested attitude toward the patient, but because of his wife's attitude and his own financial limitations is unable to do a great deal for him.

Miss Anthony is an unmarried woman, forty-six years old, who has no personal income or resources. At the time of her application for the pension in 1919 her mother, two brothers, and two sisters were giving her no assistance, and she was dependent for support upon a Christian Science practitioner who had taken an interest in her but who has since died.

For the past four years Miss Anthony has lived with her brother and his family in a small six-room frame house that he is buying and improving as he is able to afford it. He has installed a furnace and electricity in the past two years. Miss Anthony pays \$5.00 a week for her room and board since the pension has been raised, which leaves her enough to pay for burial insurance and her other small personal expenses. She does most of the heavy work about the house as her sister-in-law is physically unable to do it. Her brother seems to be a domineering person who is more interested in her ability to work and to pay than in assisting her, but the sister-in-law is kindly and insists that Miss Anthony have certain privileges in the home.

She is an illiterate person who has had very few opportunities in life but she is very independent and seems sincerely anxious to find some service that she can render in return for the pension.

Mr. Mayberry is an absolutely helpless, bedridden man who is also unable to speak. His disabilities are the result of syphilitic infection. His family applied for the pension for him upon the suggestion of the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary, and the grant was made in 1920. The pensioner lives with his brother

and two unmarried sisters in an old six-room, plainly furnished, two-story frame house that is being purchased upon a monthly payment plan. One sister and the brother work to support the family, while the other sister acts as housekeeper and cares for the patient. The family income is quite limited although the sister who is the housekeeper states that she does not know the exact amounts. The pension in this case seems to make it possible for the family to care for this helpless pensioner at home. He has no other resources as his small savings were spent in treatment. The family are devoted to his care and prefer not to place him in an institution so long as they are able to provide for him with the aid of the pension.

Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, both of whom receive the pension, have been known to the United Charities and have a consistent history of "street canvassing." Mr. Sheridan, who is now about forty-five years old, was first known to the Charities in 1912, after the death of his first wife when he needed assistance in placing his children in an institution. Very soon after this he married a second time a young blind woman in order to establish a home for his children. The Charities tried unsuccessfully to dissuade him by enlisting the aid of various interested organizations. The marriage ended very sadly as Mrs. Sheridan was burned to death when her clothing caught fire in the kitchen one day and she rushed out of the house for help.

The mandatory pension act was passed at this time, and a grant was made to Mr. Sheridan in 1916 and stayed in 1918 when his income was said to exceed the amount allowed by the law. From this time until 1924, when he was reinstated as a pensioner, he was not known to the Charities. During this period he married a third time the present Mrs. Sheridan, and they had a child in 1922. Mrs. Sheridan applied for a pension in 1925, and the family was last known to the Charities before the first payment was made. At that time there were seven in the household group. Mr. Sheridan, who said that his work at the Lighthouse did not yield him an adequate income, found street canvassing more profitable. Mrs. Sheridan had found the work at the Lighthouse "too heavy" for her, but she was willing to consider something else. There was at this time no direct evidence of her street canvassing. Madeleine, the oldest daughter of Mr. Sheridan's first wife, left home, and her whereabouts was unknown to the family. Donald, aged seventeen, lived at home and had been working for the Automatic Electric Company, but after his wages were cut his father had him sell on the street. Not long afterward he left home, and Mrs. Sheridan's grant was made temporarily until his return but has not been stayed since. Another son, Albert, aged fourteen, was in school at Jacksonville but spent his summers with the family. Stephen, a three-year-old son of Mr. Sheridan and his third wife, seemed to require her care in the home. The family had as boarders two young blind girls from South Carolina who were trying to earn and save enough money by street canvassing to return to their own homes. They paid \$5.00 each weekly to the common fund when they had it.

The Charities were never successful in discouraging this family from their street canvassing, and the case-worker with the blind considers them most uncooperative and difficult. The family now receives two pensions, which they supplement by street canvassing. They strongly resent any interference for purposes of considering their problems, and it is very doubtful if they would cooperate in any plan for their support which involved working rather than street canvassing.

The blind-pension law, or, as it is entitled in the statutes, the Act for the Relief of the Blind, was first enacted in 1903.¹ The Act was at first permissive, allowing the counties to appropriate for payments to be made to males over twenty-one and to females over eighteen, who had resided in the county not less than three years whose income was not over \$250. Such persons as might be found to be blind by an examiner for whose appointment the statute provided might receive an annual benefit of not over \$250, which should be paid in quarterly instalments.

Cook County did not take advantage of this authority but in 1915² the Act was made mandatory, the other provisions remaining substantially the same. In 1923³ residence in the state of ten years was added as a requirement, and in 1927⁴ citizenship was also added to the qualifications and other important changes were made. The income that might be enjoyed was raised to \$465 for an individual or \$1,000 for a family if the blind person is married; the benefit was raised to \$365, still paid in quarterly instalments, and the state now undertook to reimburse the counties to the extent of one-half the amount paid.

The statute under which the pensions are now granted may be briefly summarized from the point of view of eligibility, procedure, amount of benefit, source of revenue, and administrative responsibility.

1. Those eligible are male persons over twenty-one or female persons over eighteen who are citizens of the United States, have resided in the state ten years, and in the county three years continuously immediately prior to their application, and whose income is not

¹ *Laws of Illinois* (1903), p. 138.

² *Ibid.* (1915), p. 256.

³ *Ibid.* (1923), p. 174.

⁴ *Ibid.* (1927), p. 202; Smith-Hurd, *op. cit.*, chap. 23, secs. 280 f.

over \$465 if the applicant is single or \$1,000 if he is married, who are not charges of a public charitable institution and are found by the examiner of the blind to be blind persons.

2. The procedure includes the following steps: The applicant files with the county clerk a sworn statement to the truth of his claim as the basis of meeting the specified qualifications and presents too the sworn testimony of two residents of the county, likewise citizens, that they know his residence to meet the requirement. He is then referred by the county clerk to the examiner, a practicing physician, appointed to that position by the county commissioners or the town supervisors as the case may be. The clerk then keeps a register of the names, addresses, and statements of the examiner and reports to the board of commissioners or supervisors, who must provide for the payment of the benefit.

Within ten days after the end of the fiscal year the clerk certifies to the state auditor the amount spent, and he draws warrants for one-half the amount for the benefit of the county.

As to the source from which the benefits are drawn, the statute speaks of the "charitable or general funds" of the county; for the state fund, which is cumulative, a special tax of one-tenth of a mill on the equalized assessed valuation of the property of the state may be laid.

3. The administration of the act is not provided for by statute other than such provision as is connected with the duties laid on the county clerk, the examiner, and the state auditor, unless duties are implied in the title of the Act or in the reference to the fund from which the payments are drawn as the "charitable or general fund." However, as has been pointed out, when in 1925 the creation of a County Bureau of Public Welfare was authorized for Cook County,¹ among the "social service functions" listed as "authorized, conferred, or imposed by law" were those relative and pertaining to "blind adults as provided in an Act for the relief of the blind approved May 11, 1903, in force July 1, 1903, as amended."²

¹ I.e., for counties of 500,000 population or more.

² *Laws of Illinois* (1925), p. 264; Smith-Hurd, *op. cit.*, chap. 34, sec. 67a. For a statement of the procedure under which the Bureau was planned and set up, including a statement about the Blind Pension, see the *Annual Report of the Bureau of Social Service of Cook County for Year Ending November 30, 1926*, pp. 12-15.

In the *Report* of the Bureau for the year ending November 30, 1927, the Director of the Bureau made the statement that "for the past three years there has been a net increase of 50 eligible applicants a year and the number of persons receiving blind pensions at that time was approximately 600." "Little is known of this group," he wrote, "except that the individuals have inadequate incomes and are blind."¹

In 1928 the Illinois Society for the Prevention of Blindness made a study of the causes of blindness of the persons receiving pensions. On June 1 of that year there were 3,517 pensioned blind persons in the state, of whom 710 were in Cook County. By January 1, 1930, the number in the state was approximately 4,350, of whom 1,000 were in Cook County, and at the end of February, the date of the first quarterly payment for the year 1930, there were 1,023 names on the Cook County roll.

Even a brief review of the legislation suggests various reasons for increases in the number of persons applying and obtaining these pensions. Among these are the fact that the legislation is tied to no preventive program either medical or social. An increase in the amount of income allowed the applicant from \$250 to \$465 or to \$1,000 for a married couple would greatly increase the number eligible for the pension. And the increase in the amount of the payment from \$250 to \$365 would make it more attractive. For all these reasons a more comprehensive study of the entire situation seems highly desirable. Such a study would be of great importance in some of the down-state counties, especially in those that might be called the "deficiency counties,"² but it was thought that a study of the Cook County beneficiaries might be of service to the Bureau of Public Welfare in its attempt to set up a social service program.

In the question of relief both purpose and practicability are important. In the case of the destitute material relief is always clearly needed and the importance of constructive social service is becoming

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20. The Director of the Bureau requested the Graduate School of Social Service Administration of the University of Chicago to undertake a study in the hope of securing information on which a constructive program of social service for the blind might be built up by the Bureau.

² See above, "State Aid for Mothers' Pensions in Illinois," by Edna Zimmerman, p. 225.

gradually appreciated. Even in the case of mothers' pension laws the absence of the father's contribution and the necessity of finding an economic substitute are kept in mind. In the case of the blind, however, there is not only the question of economic need but of compensation for misfortune and distress of a social character. This came out very clearly in the legislative discussions in 1915 when an unsuccessful attempt was made to introduce features into the law analogous to those of the Pauper Act, or the mothers' aid legislation.

The cases given below illustrate situations of which there are doubtless many in which relatives might without great hardship be called on. The question is of course important so long as there are many families, widows with children, aged and helpless persons although with sight, or homeless children, for whom adequate care and service are not available because of limited resources.

For a study of public provision of this kind for any group suggests at once other forms of public provision such as that under the Pauper Act or under the Mothers' Aid Law. It will be noticed, however, that there is in the Act for the Relief of the Blind no suggestion of the principle of chargeability, which is so important a feature of the Pauper Act.¹ Nothing is said about the obligation of relatives to furnish support. In the Mothers' Aid Law,² too, it is specified that relief is to be given only when those relatives legally liable to contribute have been called on, so that claimants for the pension have always been required to show that those liable under the poor-law were either contributing or unable to contribute.

The following cases illustrate situations in which relatives of blind pensioners might be able to contribute or to give entire support:

Mrs. Randall³ is American born, seventy-four years of age, with three sons and three daughters, and has lived in Chicago since the World's Fair. She applied for the pension six years ago when she learned of it through the Department for Visitation of the Adult Blind. At that time her husband, who was seventy-six years old, was earning six to eight dollars weekly as a cigar-maker. They owned a two-story frame building valued at \$3,500, where they lived and from which they received \$16 monthly rent. The pension was refused upon the recommendation of the present case-worker on the grounds of ownership of

¹ Smith-Hurd, *op. cit.*, chap. 107, secs. 1, 2.

² *Ibid.*, chap. 23, secs. 283 f.

³ The names used in this article are of course fictitious.

property and of the ability of the sons to support. Six months later the situation was reinvestigated, and the pension recommended by the case-worker and granted although there was no apparent change in the situation.

At the present time Mr. Randall is unable to work, and this aged couple live in their three-room, second-floor, stove-heated flat, which is quite ill kept. Their income consists of the blind pension, \$16 monthly rent, clothing, and emergency assistance from their children. This seems to be primarily a problem of old age as the pensioner is able to read Braille, use a typewriter, and could do little more outside if she had her sight. Mr. and Mrs. Randall say that their children would like them to come to live in their homes, but the pensioner and the husband prefer to retain their independence in the simple surroundings to which they are accustomed.

Mrs. Hofer is a widow of seventy-one who has been receiving the pension for over ten years. She was born in Germany but was brought to take up her permanent residence in Chicago when she was nine years old. Her claims to citizenship were based on the fact that her husband was known to have voted in the ward although his citizenship papers had been lost. At the time of her application she had been blind for fourteen years and had had treatment at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary which did not help her. She was living in a family group with a married daughter, her husband and baby, an unmarried son, and a widowed daughter with four children. They were in very straightened circumstances, and the application for the pension was made at the suggestion of a worker from the Department for the Visitation of Adult Blind who was trying to teach Mrs. Hofer to read Braille.

Contacts with the Pension Department have been very few as Mrs. Hofer's daughter has collected her checks and only occasional visits have been made to be sure she is still living. About five years ago an unsuccessful attempt was made to persuade the married daughter with whom she was living to support her. The daughter felt then as she feels now that with the heavy expenses of buying a home that she could not take from her own family, supported by her husband who is a laboring man, to contribute to her mother's expenses.

About five months prior to the investigator's visit the daughter decided that she was no longer able to keep her mother at home, so Mrs. Hofer moved with her unmarried son into rooms with a friend. She pays \$6.00 a week for her room and board in a small, stove-heated, plainly furnished cottage. Her son, who has poor eyesight, earns about \$25 a week from which he supplements her pension. Her two daughters do not contribute to her support but would not let her suffer in case of extreme need.

This seems to be primarily a case of old age complicated by the additional handicap of blindness. This pensioner has no contacts with other blind people or organizations for the blind. Her sole recreation seems to be a tiny radio which she cannot adjust herself. She has never begged, and the family is not a type that would ever permit this, but they feel that it is her right to receive assistance

from the county. A careful investigation would probably show that the married daughter with the assistance of the son could support Mrs. Hofer without the pension, but it would be difficult to persuade her to do this under the present law.

Miss Murphy is an unmarried woman of about sixty-one years of age who was brought up in Jacksonville, Illinois. She lost her sight as a very young woman and soon afterward came to Chicago to live. She was provided for by her relatives as she had no resources of her own and never attempted to work. Soon after the first mandatory blind-pension law was passed in 1915 a political friend of her brother-in-law suggested that she apply for the pension. She did this and has received it regularly since.

At present she lives with her brother-in-law, who is a widower, an unmarried sister, and a cousin in a well-furnished apartment in a very good neighborhood. The building is owned by her brother-in-law. Apparently the family is well able to care for this blind pensioner, who pays nothing for room and board. She uses her pension for her personal needs and it is supplemented when necessary. The family seem very devoted to her, and she undoubtedly would be well taken care of regardless of whether or not she received the pension. However, the brother-in-law who provides the home is not legally responsible for her. She herself looks upon the pension not as a necessary relief but as a personal income enabling her to have a feeling of independence.

Mr. Preston is an eighty-nine-year-old colored man who lives with his son and daughter. At the time of his application for the pension in 1915 he had lived in Chicago for twenty-two years and had been blind for eight years. He had no other income than that given him by a married son who supported him. His married daughter was able to do nothing for him as her husband frequently deserted her so that she depended upon the county for assistance.

At the present time he is a very neat old man handicapped by deafness to the extent of being unable to understand the conversation of persons to whom he is unaccustomed. The son who formerly supported Mr. Preston is dead but another son rents a five-room apartment for \$60 a month and provides a home for the pensioner and his married daughter, whose husband permanently deserted her when she became so crippled with arthritis as to be practically bed-ridden. The son is a real estate salesman who apparently is quite successful and able and willing to provide for his father and sister who has no resources. Mr. Preston pays his son \$25 a month from his pension for room and board and the remainder takes care of his few personal expenses. He has no other income. This is primarily a problem of old age with the additional handicap of blindness and deafness. Careful investigation might possibly show the son able to provide for him without assistance from the county according to standards adopted under the poor-law. It should be remembered, however, that he is already supporting his sister without outside assistance.

Mr. Jones is a seventy-year-old Negro who had been blind for twenty years when he applied for the pension in 1915. The grant was not made until January, 1917, when he had fulfilled the residence requirements of living ten years in the state. Since he became blind it has been necessary for him to receive assistance from his children, but at the time of his application for the pension he was able to supplement this by making hammers and selling them from door to door.

At the present time he lives in a five-room, second-floor apartment in a good South Side Negro neighborhood with his daughter, son-in-law, and granddaughter. The son-in-law works in an auto factory and with the assistance of his wife, who does day work, is buying the two-apartment building in which they live. There is also a young woman who pays for her room and board. Mr. Jones has no income other than the pension and occasional small gifts from the other children who, he states, are unable to do more for him. In return for his room, board, and care of his clothes and laundry he pays \$20 a month and takes care of the furnace, dishes, and his own bed.

If the pension were not available Mr. Jones's children could and undoubtedly would provide for him without outside assistance.

Mr. Jacobs is an unmarried man, sixty years old, who has been blind since 1906 and has received the pension for over ten years. He has lived all his life in Chicago, and was a telegraph operator until he lost his sight. At this time he spent all his savings upon treatment, and since then has been supported and cared for by a brother and sister. At one time he considered trying to work at the Lighthouse but decided that the wages paid would not compensate him for the strain and hazards of the long trip daily.

Conditions in this case are practically unchanged from those existing at the time of his application for the pension. Mr. Jacobs lives with his brother and sister in an eight-room, comfortably furnished house owned by the brother. The group is supported from a common fund derived from the income of the brother, who is a locomotive engineer, \$2,700 annually; rent from roomers, about \$750; and the income of the pensioner from writing insurance, about \$150. The total income is about \$3,600 exclusive of the pension. The brother and sister could and undoubtedly would support Mr. Jacobs entirely if the pension were not available.

Mr. Carnes is a Negro of forty-five years who has been receiving the pension for over three years. At the time of the application in 1926 he had been a resident in the state for thirty-five years and of the county for six years. He was a salesman for a piano company but was unable to support himself after the loss of his sight. At this time he had one glass eye but was able to see a little with the other. His blindness is due to a cataract for which an operation was performed at the County Hospital in 1921. He is divorced from his wife and has no knowledge of where she is.

At present he lives with his mother, sister, brother-in-law, and their two sons

in a five-and-one-half-room apartment rented for \$65 a month. Aside from the pension his income consists of about \$100 a year derived from commissions on occasional radio sales and work done on election days. However, his room and board are furnished him free in return for his services about the house, his payment of the gas bill, and occasional contributions of food for the family.

His mother has no income, and his sister does day work to supplement her husband's income as a porter on a Pullman sleeping car. Mr. Carnes feels that they are doing all they can for him in providing him with a home although they would never let him suffer. He has no financial worries, is scornful of begging, and seems quite well adjusted. He prefers association with sighted people to that of the blind and definitely tries to live in so far as possible the life of a sighted person. His responsibilities about the house and his ability to assist his nephews with their schoolwork inasmuch as he is a high-school graduate enable him to retain this feeling of independence.

The lack of definitions in the Blind Relief Act gives rise to many questions too, some of which are submitted to the Attorney-General for exposition. Many of these suggest themselves if some of the case records are summarized.

There is, for example, the degree of sightlessness required in order that a pension be granted. A reading of the statutes suggests that, other factors in eligibility being present, it is for the examiner of the blind to diagnose and determine whether or not the payment should be granted. In the case of Miss Nora Troop the applicant has a considerable amount of sight.

Miss Troop is an unmarried woman, thirty-three years old, who has sufficient vision to read very large print although she is very much handicapped by her visual defect. She attended the Chicago public schools, passing seven grades with special assistance from her family, and spent some time at Jacksonville but was quite unhappy there. She applied for the pension in 1917 when she was twenty-one years old and has received it continuously since except for a period of about nine months in 1927 when she lived in the Illinois Industrial Home.

At present she lives with her sister and mother in a six-room, stove-heated flat about one block from a car line and a business street. They pay \$48 a month rent but have three roomers paying about \$600 a year, which takes care of their rent. The family live from a common fund, composed at present of the pension and about \$10.50 a week earned by Miss Troop by work in a laundry. This amounts to over \$500 a year, which makes Miss Troop legally ineligible for the pension. However, at the time of the interview she had had some difficulty with her fellow-employees because her defective vision necessitated extra work on their part and which she feared would cost her her job. Her mother has been quite ill, which has made it necessary for the sister to leave her position, paying

\$25 a week, to care for her. When the mother is well enough for the sister to work, and as long as Miss Troop is able to hold a job, it would seem fair to withdraw the pension. A careful case-work investigation would probably show the family to be self-supporting without it, and the personally earned income of Miss Troop would make her ineligible. However, at the present time, the income from Miss Troop's earnings, her pension, and that from the roomers is only \$11 a year greater than that which would be estimated as necessary according to the Chicago Standard Budget for Dependent Families.

In the case of another pensioner whom we shall call Frank Blackburn, the examiner, in March, 1929, pronounced the applicant "not blind." The pension was granted, however, and it was agreed that while he could see a great deal he could not see everything, that he was industrially handicapped, and was a necessitous person. It was suggested that the grant was made because he came with letters from the Family Welfare Society and would probably not have been made but for that support.

The uncertainty as to the degree to which the examiner's word should be treated as final has caused the authorities to appeal to the Attorney-General. One such request went from Jackson County, when several applicants who were able to work insisted that they were eligible. To an inquiry from that county the Attorney-General replied in the following words:

. . . . I wish to state that I do not find where any Illinois authority has defined blindness under the "Relief of the Blind Act."

Section 5 of the "Relief of the Blind Act" (section 283, chapter 23, Smith-Hurd's Revised Statutes of Illinois, 1927), provides that the "examiner of the blind" shall endorse on the applications for relief under the act a certificate to each applicant, showing whether he or she is blind or not. The section of the statute immediately preceding said section 5, being section 4 of the Act, (general section 282), provides that the county board shall appoint in each county a regular practicing physician to be "examiner of the blind."

The Act practically leaves each situation in the hands of the examiner of the blind. . . .

Webster defined the word "blind" in the following language:

"Destitute of the sense of seeing, either by natural defect or deprivation"; "without sight."

I find upon research that the legislature of California has defined blindness to be "inability, by reason of defective sight, to read ordinary printed matter"—such inability—"is 'blindness' within the meaning of the chapter relating to the deaf, dumb and blind asylum," according to the text found in volume one, "Words and Phrases," page 809, as applied to section 2241 of the California Code of 1903.

I assume that the California statute would be construed to mean that the lack of power of vision in each individual is such that the use of eye glasses does not overcome the deficiency.

Everything considered, it would appear to me that a person is blind when his eyesight is so deficient that even by the aid of eye glasses he cannot do the ordinary things of life, such as reading ordinary print.

It is difficult to determine just at what point of deficiency actual blindness sets in, and unless there appears to be fraud, collusion or prejudice existing on the part of the examiner, his judgment should be final.

With reference to residence requirements a number of questions arise. One is connected with a plan in which the officials of other counties appear to have connived. It will be recalled that the residence in the state must have been ten years but in the county only three. It seems that sometimes a pensioner from another county will move to Cook County and for the term of three years continue to receive the pension from the county of his former residence, after which an application is made to the authorities of Cook County. In the case of Mrs. Christine Smith, who applied in Cook County, February 21, 1921, it was learned that she had lived in Cook County three years but that during the whole time she had received a pension from the authorities of another county, where she had lived many years. She had, however, at the age of seventy and being widowed moved to Cook County to make her home with a niece and nephew. The Cook County authorities when they learned of her receiving the pension from the other county held up her Cook County pension for a year. Of course the question was one of residence, but there was no logic in holding up her pension for a year unless the authorities associated the term of residence with that required under the poor-law. There were a number of cases, in fact, in which authorities of other counties paid for terms of three years the pensions of persons who left their jurisdictions and moved to Cook County.

As in the case of defining blindness, appeal has been made to the Attorney-General in cases of this kind; and he has ruled that neither the county from which the pensioner goes nor that to which he comes has the right to pay the pension during that three-year interval.¹

¹ The two following letters show the kinds of cases on which he rules. Neither of these went to him from Cook County.

"DEAR SIR:

"I have received your letter of the 12th instant, in which you ask me to advise you as to whether or not a blind person, who is receiving aid under the 'Relief of the Blind'

Perhaps the term that is the least satisfactory and least understood is that of "income" in the provision that to be eligible an applicant must if single have an income of not more than \$465 and if married a joint income of not more than \$1,000.

It is clear that the income contemplated is that received for the entire year. Thus the case of Mr. Olaf Johnson, who works at the Lighthouse and earns \$11 a week, except in the summer, and also does extra piecework from time to time, and that of Mrs. Anna

Act, may continue to receive aid after removal from the county until such time as she shall be able to qualify in the county to which she is moving.

"In reply, I desire to call your attention to a part of Section 8 of the 'Relief of the Blind' Act (Section 286, Chapter 23, Smith-Hurd's Revised Statutes, 1927) which is as follows:

" 'It is hereby made the duty of the board of county commissioners or board of supervisors of each county in this State to provide in the annual appropriation for the payment of persons so entitled to said benefit, who have complied with the provisions of this Act, and to cause warrants on the county treasurer to be drawn, properly endorsed, payable, to each of said persons in said county each quarter in each year thereafter, during the life of said persons, *while they are residents of said county* or until said disability is removed.'

"I find no provision in the said act for the payment of aid to blind persons during a time when they may be establishing a domicile or residence in a different county from that in which the aid has been allowed under said act."

"DEAR SIR:

"I have received your letter of the 22d instant, which is as follows:

" 'I would like your opinion relative to the construction of the Act for the Relief of the Blind.

" 'In the case I have under consideration a blind person in this County, who is receiving pension under the provision of the act, marries a blind person from another County, who is also receiving pension at the time of marriage from that county under the act. Following the marriage they both take up their residence in this County which has been within just the past few weeks. As I understand the requirements of the law in order for the person moving to this county to be entitled to receive pension in this county she must have resided here for three years, and I find no section of the statute providing for transfer of pension from one county to another upon removal.

" 'These parties feel that the person moving to this county should be entitled to continue to receive pension, at least the part paid by the State, but there is no provision in the act for that contingency.

" 'Kindly let me have your opinion regarding this matter.'

"In answer to your letter, I wish to state that it is my opinion that the position you have taken, as expressed in your letter, is correct in all particulars mentioned."

Marriott illustrate the ambiguity of this requirement as well as the ignoring of any principle of chargeability.

Mr. Johnson is a man forty-five years old who is a lifelong resident of Chicago. He applied for the pension in 1927 after he had been blind for four years. He had been divorced for eleven years, and his wife had remarried and had possession of the children. He lived with his mother until her death in 1926, when his two married brothers assumed the responsibility for his support and he lived with them alternately. At the time of application he had no income and no substitute for his former occupation as a surveyor.

One of the workers in the State Department for Visitation of the Adult Blind is an old friend of Mr. Johnson, and upon her recommendation and the suggestion of the case-worker for the blind from the Bureau of Public Welfare he applied for work at the Lighthouse. At the present time he earns \$11 a week at the Lighthouse except during the summer and extra for occasional piecework. Out of this income plus the pension he is able to pay \$10 a week for his room and board and to save \$2.00 weekly on a \$1,000 equity in some property being purchased in partnership with one of his brothers in addition to providing for his personal expenses. His brothers both own their homes and are in comfortable circumstances that would enable them to assist Mr. Johnson if the pension were not available. It is possible if a statement of the amount of his wages from the Lighthouse was secured that he would be ineligible for the pension on the basis of his present income. The piecework that he does may increase his income to \$465 a year in spite of the fact that there is no work during the summer.

Mrs. Marriott is a woman fifty-four years old who has lived in Illinois all of her life and had lived in Cook County for fourteen years at the time of her application for blind relief in 1915. She has received the relief regularly since then although her eligibility was questioned in 1918. Her husband is a blind man who at the time of the application was reported as earning about eleven dollars a week as broom-maker. He has never received the pension. The United Charities knew the family in 1923 as applicants for railroad transportation for a summer visit to relatives, but very little information was secured and no attempt was made to analyze the family situation.

At present the family rent a four-room, second-floor, stove-heated flat for \$21 a month. There is no evidence of extreme poverty as the flat seems poorly but sufficiently furnished. Mr. Marriott still works as a broom-maker about nine months in the year and earns about \$20 a week. They have managed to save \$1,000, which is in the bank as a protection against future emergencies. If, as reported, there is no other income than the husband's earnings and the blind relief, this couple are self-respecting and self-maintaining within the requirements of the law as it includes no statement in regard to savings. They apparently live a normal life in so far as possible with an occupation for Mr. Marriott, household duties and responsibilities for Mrs. Marriott, and reading (in Braille), radio, friends, and club contacts as recreation for both.

Here again the Attorney-General has interesting things to say, for example, on the subject of the character of a federal pension in relation to income, of the question as between gross and net income, and so forth. These opinions are not commonly available and on that account are of special interest.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 6th instant, which is as follows:

"We desire an opinion from you as to whether or not a pension paid by the Federal Government shall be construed as 'Income,' within the meaning of the word 'Income,' as used in 'An Act for the Relief of the Blind,' approved May 11, 1903, as amended by the laws of 1927.

"The question arises from the following situation:

"The widow of a Civil War Veteran has been receiving from Macon County the benefit provided by the above Act. She is now receiving a pension from the Federal Government of \$40.00 per month, or \$480.00 per annum. Should this be considered as 'Income,' then her income is more than \$465.00 per annum and she would not be entitled to the benefit of \$365.00 per annum, provided in the above Act. She has no other income than the pension from the National Government. Does the word income as used in the above Act include the pension from the National Government?"

In answer to your question, I wish to state that the "Relief of the Blind" Act appears to us to be what the title of the act implies. If the blind are relieved from sources other than those provided for in the act, it is my opinion that such blind persons cannot avail themselves of the said "Relief of the Blind" Act.

In the case you mention in your letter, the blind person is receiving \$480.00 per year from the Federal Government which is in excess of the maximum amount of income provided for in the act as a basis for the necessity for relief.

It is my opinion that pensions from the Federal Government should be considered as income under the provisions of Section 3 of the "Relief of the Blind" Act (Sections 279 to 287a inclusive, Chapter 33, Smith-Hurd's Illinois Revised Statutes, 1927).

One confusing provision with reference to income is that providing for the joint income of a married couple. The words of the statute describing those who are ineligible are "who has an income of more than \$465 per annum, or who is married and the total income of such person and spouse is one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or more per annum." The facts in a few cases will illustrate the ambiguities arising in the administration of these pensions.

There is the case of Mr. and Mrs. Payne, who are a blind couple, lifelong residents of Chicago, both of whom receive the pension. Mrs. Payne applied for

the pension in 1915 and the grant was made. At that time Mr. Payne was earning about \$17 a week, and a son who lived with them earned \$70 a month. Complaints were made to the pension officers that the family were living in very comfortable circumstances, and the pension was stayed in 1919 on the basis of the son's earnings. Various letters were received by the Pension Department from politically influential persons, and in 1921 Mrs. Payne was reinstated as a pensioner.

Each summer from 1923 on this couple were known to the Family Welfare Society as applicants for railroad transportation for Mrs. Payne to visit her mother. In 1928, shortly after Mr. Payne had applied for the pension but before his first check had been paid, an investigation of the financial status was made by the Family Welfare Society. At that time the family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Payne, a son, a daughter-in-law, and one roomer, who were living in a six-room, third-floor apartment renting for \$50 a month. Mr. Payne was reported as earning from \$16 to \$18 a week working in a nut factory, although there is no record of this in the blind-pension investigation made two months earlier. Mrs. Payne worked occasionally and contributed irregular small amounts although at one time after she received the grant she earned \$18 a week. The son who lives with the family is a diabetic and earns very little, but his wife earns \$10 weekly for half-time work at a grocery store. Most of this sum is spent for special food and insulin for the son. The boarder supposedly pays \$4.00 a week but as he is blind the family permit him to pay irregularly, when he has the money. An estimate of the income of this family group shows it to exceed that allotted in the Chicago Standard Budget for Dependent Families by about \$40 a year if the earnings of the daughter-in-law are excluded and assigned to the son for the extra expenses made necessary by his diabetic condition. Mr. Payne's income plus Mrs. Payne's pension exceeded the \$1,000 permitted by the law as yearly income for a married couple at the time of the grant of his pension if a pension may be interpreted to constitute part of the income of the family.

An attempt was made to secure an interview with the family but Mr. Payne and Mrs. Payne were working daily and were not anxious to talk over their problems and plans. The case-worker with the blind finds them rather difficult. This may be due to the fact that they fear an investigation would show them ineligible for the pension on a financial basis.

There are, too, sources of income that are recognized as especially precarious. It is perhaps due to that fact that in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Landier the pension has been granted although the income from roomers is known to exceed the amounts specified in the statute:

Mr. Landier, a married man of forty-five, has been a resident of Chicago all his life. He was a teamster who lost his sight in 1924 and applied for the pension about a year later upon the suggestion of an employee in the county agent's office

whose mother belonged to the same lodge as Mrs. Landier. Conditions in the home seem to be very much as they were at the time of his application. Mr. and Mrs. Landier, their son, and two boarders are living in a comfortably furnished, six-room, stove-heated flat rented for \$28 a month and located above a store in a business district. The son, who is twenty-seven, is employed as a truck-driver and pays \$15 a week for his room and board, while two other boarders each pay \$10 a week. Mrs. Landier formerly earned enough to pay the rent by making and selling lamp shades, but now she can sell only very occasional orders. The income from the boarders is over \$1,800 a year, which is not of course clear profit, but which with the pension gives the family a very comfortable living.

Mr. Landier is a comparatively young man who has never learned Braille or any occupation since his loss of sight. His blindness is due to syphilitic infection resulting in optic atrophy, and in addition to his blindness he has some difficulty in walking about. He spends his time smoking and listening to the radio, and assisting with such tasks about the house as the dishes and the scrubbing. There is a possibility that he might learn some trade that would at least keep him busy at home and be partially remunerative. At any rate, a skilful case-work investigation and assistance might make this family self-maintaining if they are not already so without the pension. An estimate of the family requirements according to the Chicago Standard Budget for Dependent Families is about \$300 lower than the income derived from the boarders and excluding the pension.

Street canvassing or the type of mendicancy that disguises itself as peddling or street singing must be considered in connection with the blind pension. Mr. and Mrs. Graves, for example, both receive pensions. Mrs. Graves supplements this income by selling sheet music from house to house and begging on the street when necessary. They refused to make an estimate of their income from this source but are living very comfortably in a three-room apartment, for which they pay \$45 a month rent. On the surface certainly their standard of living appears to be higher than that which could be maintained on \$1,000 a year.

There are cases in which the pensioner may be the owner of property which at the time may not be producing an income proportionate to its real value. An interesting case of this kind was referred by the State's Attorney of Ford County to the Attorney-General, whose reply contains the facts as well as his opinion in the case:

DEAR SIR:

I have received your letter of the 2nd instant, which is as follows:

"Under the new statute for pensions to blind persons, if a blind man, together with his spouse, do not have an income of \$1000 per annum, or over, such blind

person is entitled to a pension. In this county a blind man, who is married, has filed an affidavit for a pension, setting up that the income of himself and spouse does not exceed \$1000, etc.

"As a matter of fact this blind man has title to 160 acres of land in this county, and on which is amortization loan of about \$10,000. Under this loan of course he pays part of the principal each year, together with the interest. He owns a dwelling house in Sibley, Illinois, worth at least \$1500 and I think he also has some money loaned out. With the payment of taxes on his farm and with the payment on his loan he, together with his wife, do not have an income of \$1000 or more. Of course, there may be years when the income of his 160 acres may make his income more than \$1000. It would seem to me that the spirit of the Blind Pension Statute would not permit him to be entitled to a pension when we take into consideration that he owns considerable real estate. At the same time of course with the payment of taxes on his farm and taxes on his home and annual payments on his amortization loan, he technically does not have an income of \$1000 or more.

"I would like to have your opinion as to whether you think this blind man, by reason of his circumstances and by virtue of the provisions of the statute, is entitled to a blind pension."

Section 3 of the Relief of the Blind Act (General Section 281, Chapter 23, Smith-Hurd's Revised Statutes of Illinois, 1927) is in the following language:

"No person who is not a citizen of the United States, or who is a charge of any charitable institution of this State or any county or city thereof, or who has an income of more than four hundred sixty-five dollars (\$465.00) per annum, or who is married and the total income of such person and spouse is one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or more per annum, or who has not resided within the State of Illinois continuously for ten (10) consecutive years, and within his respective county for three years, immediately before applying for said benefit, shall be entitled to the provisions of this Act."

It is my opinion that the legislature in enacting said section 3 had in mind gross income and not net income.

It must be remembered that this act is one providing for gratuitous relief, and, in my opinion, the court should consider this fact in adjudicating claims for benefits thereunder. The act is intended to provide a means for blind persons to reside at home with their families where such a course is possible. To grant relief to a blind person who owns one hundred and sixty acres of land and also a dwelling house, would appear to me to be unwarranted. The act, in my opinion, was not intended to apply to such cases.

In my opinion, the position you have taken is correct, and, although the farm and residence might for crop failure reasons or otherwise fail to bring \$1000 gross income some years, it is my opinion that that fact would be more than offset by the probability that the income for other years will be much more than \$1000.

It appears to me that the court would not be warranted in granting the relief in the case you have outlined in your letter.

The statute excludes as beneficiaries of the Act those who are cared for in public charitable institutions, but says nothing about those under private auspices. And among one hundred case records read in Chicago there were eight who were receiving that kind of care. Of these, five were in an institution for the chronically ill, two in a Home for the Aged, and one, a mild mental case, in a private "Rest Cure."

As has been implied, up to the present time no effort has been put forth to render social service or to give constructive help with the benefit. Evidently great varieties of standards must prevail between and among the counties, but the state payment which simply reimburses the county can exercise no influence toward securing greater uniformity or to induce the counties to develop a program of constructive social service. Yet the following summaries call attention to situations in which helpful social treatment would be of great value to the pensioner, and a number of the records already cited show cases in which sound case work would probably lighten the taxpayer's burden.

Mr. Jensen is a widower, sixty years old, who was born in Denmark and came to the United States as a young man. His only living relatives are two sisters in Denmark, from whom he never hears. He developed a cataract in one eye in 1892, but his serious difficulty with his eyes did not begin until 1901, when he contracted glaucoma while working in a lumber camp in Northern Michigan. His wife died two years later, leaving him quite alone in this country. He was treated at the County Hospital in 1905 and at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary in 1907, when he became totally blind.

He managed to get along with the aid of old friends upon an income from selling pencils. At one time he was able to work in a telephone factory but had to give that up entirely six years ago because his age and his disability prevented his competing with other workers. He applied for the pension in 1916 but had some difficulty and did not receive it regularly until 1925. He spent three winters in Oak Forest (the county almshouse) when he was unable to maintain himself even with the aid of the pension.

He roomed with friends on the Northwest Side until a year and one-half ago when it became extremely difficult for him to go about through traffic, and his income from "selling pencils" lessened. A friend who owned some property on the outskirts of the city offered him the use of it in return for the payment of taxes amounting to about \$25 a year. Mr. Jensen now lives all alone in a five-room, stove-heated cottage without conveniences. It is set quite far from the road and apart from his neighbors. In the winter time, when the snow covers the

paths and ruts by which he is accustomed to find his way about, he cannot leave the house. He is entirely dependent upon the pension and small gifts of clothing and food that friends bring him about once a week.

Mr. Jensen has adjusted himself and is able to get along with the increased pension. He no longer "sells pencils" and is quite happy in his independence. However, it does not seem advisable for a person handicapped as he is to live alone in an almost rural neighborhood. If case-work service were available it might be possible to assist him in making a more desirable plan.

Mr. and Mrs. Linstrom are both graduates of the Jacksonville School for the Blind and were residents of the Illinois Industrial Home at the time the mandatory law providing for blind pensions was passed. They were unhappy and dissatisfied there and in 1917 decided to marry and establish their own home with the assistance of the pension. Their relatives were either unwilling or unable to aid them, and the investigators feared they would be unable to get along. Mr. Linstrom is a very excellent pianist but is such a large man that he is further handicapped in addition to his blindness and has been able to find very little work. Mrs. Linstrom has a good singing voice but is a rather unattractive, untidy hunchback who has not been able to make her voice remunerative. They have two daughters born two and three years after their marriage.

The family was reported to the United Charities by the county agent shortly before Mr. Linstrom's first pension payment when they were urged, and refused, to consider returning to the Illinois Industrial Home, but no active supervision was given until after the birth of the two children and the grant of a pension to Mrs. Linstrom. At this time conditions in the family were very bad, the living conditions were poor, and the children did not seem to be receiving proper care. There was an investigation by the Juvenile Protective Association and by the Juvenile Court, but without action being taken. After two or three months Mr. Linstrom found work with the Chicago Lighthouse, and the case was dropped as no more requests for assistance were made. The family later stated that they feared the United Charities would place the children in foster homes, so they decided to seek no further assistance from the society. When the children became of school age, they were placed in a denominational home and school in the country but have been brought home recently as the parents have been unable to pay even the very small tuition and board necessary.

The family have moved three or four times in the past three years, each time in an attempt to better their conditions. At the present time they are living in a five-room, stove-heated, second-floor flat above a store, for which they pay \$40 a month rent. The two children are staying with a friend of Mrs. Linstrom's as the mother is unwell and may have to go into the hospital for a short time. The income consists of the two blind pensions, \$2.00 or \$3.00 a week earned by Mr. Linstrom's playing for a mission-church service, supplemented by what he gets from street begging. Mrs. Linstrom says that because he is unable to move about he receives a comparatively small amount, never over \$200 during the

year. Mrs. Linstrom spoke very frankly of the dislike of this means of securing a livelihood and the preference for work which her husband seems unable to secure. This family has struggled against great odds, and the services of an experienced case-worker would probably be of great value to them. An estimate of their necessary requirements according to the Chicago Standard Budget for Dependent Families shows a deficiency in the reported income including the two pensions of about \$80 below this standard even when the food and clothing of the two children are considered as provided by Mrs. Linstrom's friend.

Mr. Capek is an unmarried man, fifty-seven years old, who lost his sight after getting a piece of iron in his eye when he was twenty-four years old. He was supported by his parents until their death, when he was left without near relatives other than a nephew, who referred him to the county agent for supplies. This resulted in an application and grant of the pension in 1925.

He has had practically no contact with agencies interested in the blind and has never learned any occupation suited to his capacity since he became disabled. When a teacher from the Department for the Visitation of the Adult Blind came to see him two years ago, he felt too old to try to learn.

At present he lives alone in a three-room, second-floor, stove-heated flat, for which he pays \$15 a month rent. The building is on the back of a lot on a kind of a bricked overcourt. The rooms are bare except for the most necessary pieces of furniture. He has no income other than the pension and rations of coal and food from the District Office of the Bureau of Public Welfare during the winter months. His nephew comes in almost every day to see how he is, and a young girl in the neighborhood cleans for him every Saturday. This man has practically no recreational outlets and leads a lonely, empty life. He was almost pathetically eager to talk to the investigator. If an agency interested in the blind had been in contact with this man soon after his handicap had developed, it would perhaps have been possible to develop useful activities and interests for him.

This discussion has concerned itself wholly with the question of the blind-pension law; but it should be kept in mind that the state maintains the other forms of public service in behalf of that group to which reference has been made, namely, the State School at Jacksonville,¹ the provision for visitation in the home,² the Industrial Home,³ the State Eye and Ear Infirmary,⁴ as well as the pension provision which has been the subject of this discussion.

It is clear that a comprehensive plan for the entire service should be developed and that in doing so co-operative relationships with

¹ See *Annual Report of the Illinois Department of Public Welfare* (1928), p. 257.

² *Ibid.*, p. 150.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 464, 477.

the educational, health, and industrial authorities should be sought. The pension should be one item carefully integrated into the whole program for the blind. But until more ample services can be rendered many other groups who are in need of special care, the pension for the blind should likewise be regarded as an item in the state program of public relief. And now that the State Fund for Mothers' Aid has initiated a policy of the grant in aid, the possibility of leveling up the service of all these for whom the state tries to care should be considered.

The Illinois Society made in 1928 an interesting Survey of the Causes of Blindness of persons receiving pensions at the time, which are summarized in the following table.

CAUSES OF BLINDNESS

Cataracts	716
Post-operative cataract	140
Optic atrophy	595
Trachoma	339
Glaucoma	295
Traumas	388
Ophthalmia neonatorum	110
Other causes	598
Total number of "diagnoses"	3,181
"Diagnoses" not obtainable or not adequate	336
Total number of blind pensioners	3,517

These figures alone indicate the necessity of a well-organized educational program for the prevention of blindness. With them should be considered the data available in the records of the institutions; and out of such a study should come a vigorous co-operative undertaking in which the departments of Public Welfare, Health, Education, and Labor should share.

ELINOR LAWRIE

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

SOURCE MATERIALS

SOME OLD AGE PENSION QUESTIONS IN ENGLAND

EDITORIAL NOTE

Parliamentary papers dealing with old age pensions in Great Britain are numerous¹ and valuable to the student. The two following documents have been selected because they contain discussions of some of the questions now concerning us in the United States. The first document is an extract from the *Report of the Departmental Committee on Old Age Pensions* at the close of the World War. American students of the question are, of course, interested in the discussion of principles rather than the amount of money paid to individual pensioners, since the amount of the pension is important only in relation to the purchasing power of money in different countries and the standard of living among the group needing pensions. The total amount now spent for pensions annually in relation to certain other expenditures now carried in this field is shown in the statement about public social services in England (see this *Review*, pp. 303-5).

The second document is an extract from the testimony given by the late Charles Booth,² so well known as the author of seventeen volumes on *Life and Labour of the People in London*.³ Mr. Booth re-

¹ In addition to those from which the two documents in this *Review* are taken, the most important British State Papers dealing with old age pensions are: *Report of the Departmental Committee on Old Age Pensions*, 1898 (Cd. 8911); *Report of the Select Committee on the Aged Deserving Poor*, 1899; *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Financial Aspects of the Proposals Made by the Select Committee of the House of Commons of 1899 about the Aged Deserving Poor*, 1900 (Cd. 67); *Report of the Select Committee on Aged Pensioners Bill*, 1903; *Administrative Concessions Made to Old Age Pensioners since the Commencement of the War*, 1916 (Cd. 8320); *Treasury Scheme for the Award of Additional Allowances to Old Age Pensioners Suffering Special Hardship Owing to the War*, 1916 (Cd. 8373).

² See frontispiece.

³ In the Final Volume of *Life and Labour*, which was written in 1902, seventeen years after his poverty studies first began, Mr. Booth made the following statement in discussing the relation of the old age pension system to charity:

"I advocate the introduction of Old Age Pensions, contributed directly from the

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